

In the Claims

Claims 1-9 and 18-20 are cancelled without prejudice.

In response to the election/restriction requirement set forth in the Office Action dated February 28, 2005, Applicant respectfully elects Group III, claims 10 and 14-17, drawn to a device containing an article detector and a treadle including a web guide plate and a guide strip, for examination herein, as shown in the following set of pending claims.

New claims 21-32 are entered herein.

Claims 10 and 15-16 have been amended as shown below. Underlines indicate insertions; ~~strikeouts~~ or double brackets [[]] indicate deletions.

1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently amended) An article conveying, guiding, and locating device, comprising:

a treadle including a web guide plate and a guide strip, ~~the treadle including a knock-lever mechanism; and~~

~~a web conveyor having a servo pick assembly and a servo helper assembly driven by a servo motor, the web conveyor configured to move a web of material and articles formed in the web;~~

an article detector carried by the treadle and operative to detect a location of an article in the web during movement of the web; ~~and~~

~~a controller communicating with the servo motor and the article detector and operative to controllably regulate and synchronize operation of the servo pick assembly and the servo helper assembly in response to the detected location of the article.~~

11. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein the web conveyor comprises a pair of wheels provided along each edge of the web, and the pair of wheels include a drive wheel and a follower wheel coacting on opposite sides of the web, the drive wheel being driven by the servo motor under control of the controller.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the knock lever mechanism comprises a knock lever arm configured to co-act with a stationary platen as the treadle is moved relative to the stationary platen during a severing operation so as to retract the follower wheel away from the drive wheel to release a web carried therebetween to enable lateral centering of articles carried in the web.

13. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the knock lever mechanism further comprises a kinematic linkage having a center pivot, and the knock lever arm is carried at one end of the kinematic linkage and a drive wheel is carried at an opposite end of the kinematic linkage.

14. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein the guide strip is spaced from the guide plate by a distance greater than a thickness of a web of material.

15. (Currently amended) The device of claim ~~40~~ 22, wherein the servo pick assembly is carried by the treadle.

16. (Currently amended) The device of claim ~~40~~ 21, wherein the treadle further comprises a secondary guide strip spaced from the web guide plate by at least four thicknesses of the web, the secondary guide strip being spaced apart from the guide strip.

17. (Original) The device of claim 16, further comprising an article detector carried by at least one of the guide strip and the secondary guide strip and operative to detect a position of an article in the web by detecting a position of a protuberance in the web as the protuberance is conveyed between the guide strip and the secondary guide strip.

18-20. (Cancelled)

Enter new claims 21-32 as follows:

21. (New) The device of claim 10 wherein the treadle includes a knock lever mechanism.

22. (New) The device of claim 10 further comprising a web conveyor having a servo pick assembly and a servo helper assembly driven by a servo motor, the web conveyor configured to move a web of material and the articles formed in the web.

23. (New) The device of claim 22 further comprising a controller communicating with the servo motor and the article detector and operative to controllably regulate and synchronize operation of the servo pick assembly and the servo helper assembly in response to the detected location of the article.

24. (New) A trim press article handling apparatus for guiding a web having articles formed therein between coacting cutting dies, comprising:

a treadle including a web guide plate and a pair of guide strips configured to guide the web along the plate and between adjacent articles to align the articles relative to the coacting cutting dies, the first guide strip spaced from the plate at most 3.5 times the thickness of the web and the second guide strip spaced from the plate at least 3.5 times the thickness of the web; and

an article detector carried by the treadle and configured to detect position of the articles relative to the coacting cutting dies.

25. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the first guide strip is spaced apart from about 1 to about 3.5 times the thickness of the web.

26. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the second guide strip is spaced apart from about 3.5 times to about 10 times the thickness of the web.

27. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the article detector comprises an optical emitter and an optical detector configured to receive a light signal from the emitter, wherein an article is conveyed through a path of the light signal to trigger detection of the article.

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first guide strip is provided on a first guide member and the second guide strip is provided on a second guide member.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 28 where in the emitter is carried by one of the first guide member and the second guide member, and the detector is carried by another of the first guide member and the second guide member.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 28 further comprising at least one cross member carried by the guide plate and at least one quick release adjustment collar provided on one or more of the first guide member and the second guide member for

securing and releasing the respective guide member to align the respective guide strip relative to the guide plate.

31. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the second guide strip is spaced from the plate a substantially greater amount than the space provided between the first guide strip and the plate to minimize frictional forces generated between the second guide strip, the plate, and web-supported articles being conveyed therebetween.

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the first guide strip and the second guide strip are supported for adjustable lateral repositioning relative to one another along the guide plate.